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Human security

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 143 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1), in which the Heads of State and Government committed themselves to discuss and define the notion of human security. The report provides an update on developments related to the advancement of human security since the 2005 World Summit. It takes stock of discussions on human security, its various definitions and its relationship to State sovereignty and the responsibility to protect. The report also outlines the principles and the approach for advancing human security and its application to the current priorities of the United Nations. Key human security initiatives undertaken by Governments, regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations, as well as the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, are presented as examples of the reach of this important concept and its growing acceptance. The report concludes by identifying the core elements and the added value of human security and provides a set of recommendations as a follow-up to the above-mentioned commitment contained in the World Summit Outcome.

Human security is based on a fundamental understanding that Governments retain the primary role for ensuring the survival, livelihood and dignity of their citizens. It is an invaluable tool for assisting Governments in identifying critical and pervasive threats to the welfare of their people and the stability of their sovereignty. It advances programmes and policies that counter and address emerging threats in a manner that is contextually relevant and prioritized. This helps Governments and the international community to better utilize their resources and to develop strategies that strengthen the protection and empowerment framework needed for the assurance of human security and the promotion of peace and stability at every level — local, national, regional and international.



I. Introduction

1. The 2005 World Summit and the decision by the General Assembly to further define the notion of human security have been critical in raising awareness and interest in the concept of human security. In paragraph 143 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the Heads of State and Government recognized that "all individuals, in particular vulnerable people, are entitled to freedom from fear and freedom from want, with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential". To that end, States Members of the United Nations have agreed to a further discussion of the notion of human security. Drawing input from a number of Governments as well as intergovernmental organizations, civil society groups, scholars and other eminent individuals, human security is gaining wide support in the United Nations and other forums.

2. At the United Nations, notable contributions have been made in advancing the human security concept. In October 2006, as a follow-up to the 2005 World Summit, the first meeting of the Friends of Human Security was held in New York. Established as an open-ended forum to promote a greater understanding of the concept of human security and its application through collaborative efforts among Member States, the Friends of Human Security has met seven times and has been instrumental in further discussing the notion of human security. In the meantime, the Human Security Network, established in May 1999, continues to play an instrumental role in highlighting the added value of human security. By focusing on common global challenges, including those pertaining to climate change, pandemics, protection of children and women against violence, small arms and light weapons, the Human Security Network draws special attention to instances of human insecurity around the world.

3. Developments on human security at the global level are similarly reflected in the agendas and policy debates among regional intergovernmental organizations such as the African Union, the European Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Organization of American States (OAS) and the League of Arab States (LAS). At the regional level, contemporary challenges — from volatile food prices, climate change and the financial and economic crisis to armed conflicts, human trafficking and transnational crime — highlight the need for comprehensive, integrated and people-centred approaches.

4. Broadly defined, human security encompasses freedom from fear, freedom from want and freedom to live in dignity. Together, these fundamental freedoms are rooted in the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations. They are also reflected in the many human security-related initiatives and activities undertaken by United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and by intergovernmental organizations as outlined in the compendium submitted to the General Assembly (A/62/695, annex).

5. Since 1999, human security projects have been supported, inter alia, by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the World Food Programme (WFP), the

United Nations Mine Action System, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security and the Policy Development and Studies Branch in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

6. Human security projects have proven beneficial in addressing the multidimensional impacts of threats to peoples and communities. Projects have covered all regions and have aimed at rebuilding war-torn societies; preventing, mitigating and responding to natural disasters; increasing harvests and strengthening food security; improving access to health care and education in times of crises; and mobilizing communities through participatory processes, local leadership and integrated capacity-building measures.

7. In this regard, on 22 May 2008, the General Assembly held an informal thematic debate on human security. During the course of deliberations, broad consensus was reached by Member States on the need for a new culture of international relations that goes beyond fragmented responses and calls for comprehensive, integrated and people-centred approaches.

8. In line with recent developments to further explore the implementation of the goals set out in paragraph 143 of the World Summit Outcome, the present report: considers the current global conditions under which the human security of individuals and communities is critically and pervasively threatened; takes stock of discussions on human security, its various definitions and its relation to State sovereignty and the responsibility to protect; outlines the principles and the approach for advancing human security and its application to the current priorities of the United Nations; presents examples of human security initiatives carried out by Governments, regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations, as well as the United Nations system; and concludes by defining the core elements and draws attention to the added value of the human security concept. In addition, a set of recommendations is provided as a follow-up to paragraph 143 of the World Summit Outcome.

II. The increased interdependencies of threats and challenges

9. Today's multiple, complex and highly interrelated threats affect the lives of millions of men, women and children around the globe. Threats such as natural disasters, violent conflicts and their impact on civilians, as well as food, health, financial and economic crises, tend to acquire transnational dimensions that move beyond traditional notions of security. While national security remains pivotal to peace and stability, there is growing recognition of the need for an expanded paradigm of security.

10. Calls for such a broader concept of security are rooted in the common issues faced by all Governments. No matter how powerful or seemingly insulated Governments may be, today's global flow of goods, finance and people increase the risks and uncertainties confronting the international community. It is in this

interconnected environment that Governments are invited to consider the survival, livelihood and dignity of individuals as the fundamental basis for their security. For no country can enjoy development without security, security without development, and neither without respect for human rights. This triangular relationship heightens the recognition that poverty, conflict and societal grievances can feed on one another in a vicious cycle. As a result, the guarantee of national security no longer lies in military power alone. Essential to addressing security threats are also healthy political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together reduce the likelihood of conflicts, help overcome the obstacles to development and promote human freedoms for all.

11. These observations are underscored by some of the challenges countries face and their negative impact on the development and stability of those most vulnerable, as well as on the broader peace and prosperity called for in the Charter. For example, in 2008, over 230,000 people lost their lives as a result of natural disasters and over 211 million were affected. As confirmed by numerous reports and noted daily in radio, print and visual media, extreme weather patterns are expected to compound and exacerbate existing vulnerabilities by disrupting harvests, undermining food security and causing competition over increasingly scarce natural resources. The combination of these vulnerabilities along with the recent downturn in global economic activity is placing added stress on already weak economic and social systems, particularly in developing countries.

12. Over the last decade, the impact of conflicts on civilians has also risen considerably. By the end of 2008, the number of people displaced as a result of conflict had reached a historic high of 42 million. When conflicts erupt, the loss of economic growth and reduction in the availability of basic services, along with militarization of political, economic and social life as well as the spread of diseases, often spill over into neighbouring communities and manifest themselves in increased insecurities within and across countries. Furthermore, criminal networks trafficking in people, drugs, arms and natural resources can involve financial flows which rival the gross domestic product (GDP) of many countries and threaten State authority, public safety and the rule of law, with significant implications for people's security and international peace.

III. Major efforts to define human security

13. Concerns for human security are not new. Civilizations from ancient to contemporary times have tried to address the security and the development concerns of their inhabitants. From the 1970s to the early 1990s, such concerns were addressed by commissions such as the Brandt Commission, the Brundtland Commission and the Commission on Global Governance.

14. However, it was not until the issuance of the 1994 *Human Development Report* by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that human security was first introduced as a distinct concept. In that report, UNDP broadly defined human security as "freedom from fear and freedom from want". Four basic characteristics (universal, people-centred, interdependent and early prevention) and seven key components (economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security) were presented as the main elements of human security.

15. Since that time, various definitions have been presented. For example, in 1999, a group of like-minded States from different regions of the world, including Austria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Norway, Slovenia, Switzerland, Thailand and South Africa, which participates as an observer, established the Human Security Network. The Network defined human security as "A humane world ... where every individual would be guaranteed freedom from fear and freedom from want, with an equal opportunity to fully develop their human potential ... In essence, human security means freedom from pervasive threats to people's rights, their safety or even their lives ... Human security and human development are thus two sides of the same coin, mutually reinforcing and leading to a conducive environment for each other".

16. In 2001, the independent Commission on Human Security, led by Sadako Ogata and Amartya Sen, set out to forge a new consensus on security threats facing contemporary societies in the twenty-first century. Recognizing that these challenges have grown more complex, the Commission, in its 2003 report entitled *Human Security Now: Protecting and Empowering People*, defined human security as "to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms — freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival livelihood and dignity." The definition provided by the Commission on Human Security has also been adopted as the working definition of human security by the Friends of Human Security at its meetings.

17. Also in 2003, OAS highlighted the importance of human security in its Declaration on Security in the Americas. Noting the profound changes that have occurred in the world and in the Americas since 1945, OAS Member States reaffirmed "that the basis and purpose of security is the protection of human beings. Security is strengthened when we deepen its human dimension. Conditions for human security are improved through full respect for people's dignity, human rights, and fundamental freedoms, as well as the promotion of social and economic development, social inclusion, and education and the fight against poverty, disease and hunger". Furthermore, "The security threats, concerns, and other challenges in the hemispheric context are of diverse nature and multidimensional scope, and the traditional concept and approach must be expanded to encompass new and non-traditional threats, which include political, economic, social, health and environmental aspects".

18. More recently, the African Union, in its Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact, has incorporated human security in its "vision of a united and strong Africa, based on respect for the principles of coexistence, non-aggression, non-interference in the internal affairs of Member States, mutual respect for individual sovereignty and territorial integrity of each State". To that end, it has defined human security as "the security of the individual in terms of satisfaction of his/her basic needs. It also includes the creation of social, economic, political, environmental and cultural conditions necessary for the survival and dignity of the individual, the protection of and respect for human rights, good governance and the guarantee for each individual of opportunities and choices for his/her full development".

19. Common to all the above definitions are three essential components that encompass the principles of human security and help further explore the added value of the concept. First, human security is in response to current and emerging threats — threats that are multiple, complex and interrelated and can acquire transnational dimensions. Second, human security calls for an expanded understanding of security where the protection and empowerment of people form the basis and the purpose of security. Third, human security does not entail the use of force against the sovereignty of States and aims to integrate the goals of freedom from fear, freedom from want and freedom to live in dignity through people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and preventive strategies.

A. Human security and national sovereignty

20. The advancement of human security requires strong and stable institutions. Among these, Governments retain the primary role in providing a rules-based system where societal relations are mutually supportive, harmonious and accountable. In cases where Government institutions are weak or under threat, the human security concept advocates addressing the root causes of these weaknesses and helps develop timely, targeted and effective responses that improve the resilience of Governments and people alike. Such an approach not only helps to reduce human insecurities but ultimately strengthens Government and local capacities and contributes to greater national security.

21. Moreover, in emphasizing the instrumental role of Governments and people in ensuring peace and stability, the Charter also gives equal weight to the sovereignty of States as well as to the livelihood and dignity of people everywhere. As articulated in the preamble and in Articles 1 and 2 of the Charter, the international community cannot have peace and security unless the rights of individuals and their fundamental freedoms are supported. In this context, human security, by addressing the varied aspects of insecurity and by focusing on the respective roles of individuals, communities and Governments, provides the analytical framework for the creation of genuine possibilities for partnership between Governments and citizens. As a result, the application of human security is expected to reinforce the stability and security of both, as well as that of the international community.

22. The indivisibility of security, development and human rights is also well articulated in the Charter and is in line with the central challenges facing Governments and people alike. Here too the human security concept seeks to enhance the sovereignty of States by focusing on the multidimensional aspects of human and therefore national insecurities. Improved capacities of Governments and their institutions to provide early warning, identify root causes and address policy gaps in order to tackle persistent and emerging challenges are key components in advancing human security and maintaining a viable framework for promoting peace and stability.

B. Human security and the responsibility to protect

23. As agreed in paragraph 143 of the World Summit Outcome, the purpose of human security is to enable all individuals to be free from fear and want, and to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential. The use of force is not

envisaged in the application of the human security concept. The focus of human security is on fostering Government and local capacities and strengthening the resilience of both to emerging challenges in ways that are mutually reinforcing, preventive and comprehensive.

24. Meanwhile, the responsibility to protect, as agreed upon by Member States in paragraphs 138 to 140 of the World Summit Outcome, focuses on protecting populations from specific cases of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleaning and crimes against humanity. As noted in the Secretary-General's report on implementing the responsibility to protect (A/63.677), the international community, guided by the principles of the Charter, must do its part to prevent and limit the escalation of these cases. Such cases result in large and complex humanitarian crises that are costly in terms of human lives, loss of social capital and financial resources, and are more difficult to resolve later.

IV. Human security principles and approach

25. The concept of human security acknowledges that due to catastrophic events people may be faced with sudden insecurities and deprivations that not only undo years of development but also generate conditions that may lead to growing tensions. As a result, human security draws attention to a wide range of threats faced by individuals and communities and focuses on the root causes of such insecurities. In addition, by understanding how particular constellations of threats to individuals and communities translate into broader intra- and inter-State security breaches, human security seeks to prevent and mitigate the occurrence of future threats, and in this regard can be a critical element in achieving national security and international stability.

26. Moreover, human security underscores the universality and primacy of a set of freedoms that are fundamental to human life, and as such it makes no distinction between civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, thereby addressing security threats in a multidimensional and comprehensive manner. In this way, the human security concept introduces a practical framework for identifying the specific challenges that are at stake in a particular situation of insecurity as well as for considering the institutional and governance arrangements that are needed to ensure the survival, livelihood and dignity of individuals and communities. Improvements in human security directly and positively impact people's daily lives and as a result give rise to more immediate and tangible results that help strengthen the legitimacy of actions taken by Governments and other actors.

27. Contained in scope, human security informs policies that, while comprehensive, are nevertheless targeted, and capture the most critical and pervasive threats that are relevant to a particular situation. For example, some human security challenges are specific to the internal dynamics of a particular community, such as lack of access to resources and opportunities, while others are transnational, such as pandemics, climate change and financial and economic crises. The consideration of the scope of human security is important in formulating policy and operational recommendations and calibrating them to particular contexts.

28. The human security concept derives much of its strength from a dual policy framework that rests upon the mutually reinforcing pillars of protection and empowerment. Application of this framework offers a comprehensive approach that

combines top-down norms, processes and institutions, including the establishment of early warning mechanisms, good governance and social protection instruments, with a bottom-up focus, in which participatory processes support the important role of individuals and communities as actors in defining and implementing their essential freedoms. As a result, human security not only promotes a framework under which people are protected and empowered, and are therefore in a better position to actively prevent and mitigate the impact of insecurities, but it also helps in establishing a social contract among various actors in a given society by cultivating public discourse, promoting local ownership and strengthening State-society relations.

29. Conditions of human insecurity vary significantly across countries and communities. Both the causes and manifestations of insecurity depend on a complex interaction of local, national, regional and international factors. As a broad, flexible and context-specific concept, human security provides a dynamic framework that enables the development of solutions that are embedded in local realities. Furthermore, by identifying the concrete needs of populations under stress, human security reveals mismatches between domestic, regional and international policies and helps identify priority needs at the local level. Subsequently, short-, medium- and long-term strategies can be developed based on the actual needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of the affected communities.

30. Finally, with its emphasis on the interconnectedness of threats, human security requires the development of an integrated network of diverse stakeholders, drawing from the expertise and resources of a wide range of actors from across the United Nations system as well as the private and public sectors at the local, national, regional and international levels. Human security can therefore promote the establishment of synergies and partnerships that capitalize on the comparative advantages of each implementing organization and help empower individuals and communities to act on their own behalf. This ensures coherence on the goals and responsibilities as well as the allocation of resources among the various actors, thereby eliminating duplication and advancing more targeted, coordinated and cost-effective responses that are people-centred and capacity-enhancing.

V. Applying the human security concept to different priorities of the United Nations

31. The crises of recent years have sharpened the focus of the international community on the global interdependence of the challenges we face. These multiple crises, which are currently on the agenda of the United Nations, reveal our mutual vulnerabilities to different types of insecurities. These crises also highlight the need for greater collaboration on the application of human security and its importance to the promotion of peace and security.

A. The global financial and economic crisis

1. The multidimensional impact

32. The global financial and economic crisis and the subsequent tightening of the credit markets have threatened the livelihoods of millions of people around the

world. As I outlined in my report on the world financial and economic crisis and its impact on development (A/CONF.214/4), the reduction in employment and income opportunities, lower trade in goods and services and the dramatic drop in remittances have resulted in further setbacks in our efforts towards poverty reduction. Previous financial and economic crises have shown that poor countries are highly susceptible to the ramifications of these crises. Rising unemployment and increasing poverty confront these countries precisely at a time when diminishing resources limit their ability to mitigate the negative impacts of these crises.

33. Moreover, the current global financial and economic crisis extends beyond an increase in economic insecurity. In the absence of appropriate counter-cyclical macroeconomic policy measures and supportive social protection systems, the crisis has had negative consequences in terms of additional food, health and environmental insecurities. The FAO projects that, as a result of the crisis, the number of hungry and undernourished people worldwide will increase to an historic high of over one billion people. In addition, changes in land use and accelerated deforestation may increase the risk of environmental degradation, adding further urgency to the challenges being faced by the international community as a result of the crisis.

34. The combined impact of these insecurities may also threaten our progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Today, with a number of donor economies in recession and many developing countries unable to mobilize the required resources, a diminished amount of funding for the Goals would not only slow global progress towards meeting them but could also reverse recent hard-won development gains in some developing countries.

2. Current responses

35. In recognizing the multidimensional effects of the global financial and economic crisis, international and national responses must be guided by the need to: (a) address the human and ecological costs of the crisis; and (b) strengthen the global partnership to accelerate progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. With the impact of these challenges intertwined, inadequate coordination among Governments will have wider security repercussions in terms of economic unilateralism and increased tensions among countries.

36. It is therefore heartening that Member States, multilateral institutions and regional bodies have mobilized to respond to the crisis collectively from a comprehensive and people-centred perspective. As a result, leaders at numerous summits have agreed to undertake actions that help address the human and social impacts of the crisis. Such responses strengthen human security since they emphasize both mitigation measures that address immediate needs as well as protection and empowerment strategies that strengthen the resilience of Governments and individuals, making it easier for them to cope with current and future crises. For example, in the most vulnerable countries where the impact of the global financial and economic crisis has placed a higher threat on the survival and livelihoods of poor communities, donors from the States Members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), as well as international organizations such as the World Bank, have agreed to provide both short-term liquidity and long-term development financing in order to support the efforts of national Governments to respond swiftly to the needs of those most severely affected by the crisis.

37. In the meantime, while the Millennium Development Goals have suffered some setbacks as a result of the global financial and economic crisis, the story is not all bleak. Progress has been made in many developing countries. The challenge now is to bridge the existing implementation gaps and to extend the reach of the Goals to the most vulnerable communities within countries. All too often, there are areas and groups that have been left behind, including rural communities, internally displaced persons, migrants, ethnic minorities, and the poorest households. In a world facing multiple crises, poverty-fighting commitments are more important than ever in ensuring human and global security.

B. Volatility in food prices and food insecurity

1. The multidimensional impact

38. The impact of rising food prices along with climate-related emergencies, protracted conflicts and the global financial and economic crisis is of particular concern to human security. These threats together have created a dramatic increase in the number of people living without sufficient food. For the first time in history, more than 1 billion people are hungry, with more than 17,000 children dying of hunger every day, one every five seconds, totalling 6 million a year. Women, children, refugees and the displaced are among the most severely impacted by rising food prices. These communities and groups suffer critical losses to their human security as they consume fewer and less nutritious foods, cut expenditures on health and education and sell their productive assets with detrimental effects on their short- and long-term well-being. Frustrations over food insecurity have also led to socio-political instabilities. Over the past year and a half, food insecurity has led to political unrest in some 30 countries where protests and civil riots related to rising food prices have been noted.

2. Current responses

39. As articulated in the Comprehensive Framework for Action of the High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, established in April 2008, a collective commitment to shielding people from downside risks in an enduring and empowering manner is central to improving food and nutritional security. In this regard, the international community and Governments must continue not only to address the root causes of food insecurity, whether due to internal or external factors, endemic or cyclical conditions, but also to support community resilience through people-centred responses that foster sustainable agricultural practices; promote income opportunities; improve market access and food distribution networks; and strengthen early warning and social protection systems.

40. Moreover, while some of the economic and structural factors related to food insecurity are common to most countries, the results, impacts and specific root causes of food insecurity vary significantly across and within countries. By focusing on the particular characteristics and conditions of food insecurity in a given country, the human security concept can help develop targeted, sustainable and preventive responses that are grounded in local realities. In addition, the human security framework helps to identify the different ways in which food insecurity can increase vulnerabilities in other areas such as health and the environment. If neglected, the

convergence of these vulnerabilities can have dire effects on the welfare of millions of people.

C. The spread of infectious diseases and other health threats

1. The multidimensional impact

41. The latest influenza A (H1N1) pandemic has been a stark reminder of the human and economic costs of health-related emergencies. Poor health, whether caused by global pandemics or due to inadequate health-care systems and other causes, poses significant threats to people everywhere. Today, it is increasingly clear that the health of one community has serious implications for that of other communities and, in some instances, between countries.

42. Poor health also weakens progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. For example, across sub-Saharan Africa, controlling onchocerciasis, river blindness, which costs less than \$1 per person, can deliver an estimated \$3.7 billion in productivity; and polio eradication could save Governments \$1.5 billion in vaccines, treatment and rehabilitation costs. Yet in many developing countries, basic lifesaving treatments are still not available to large segments of the population, leading to significant levels of lost productivity and unacceptable rates of preventable death.

2. Current responses

43. The global response to the H1N1 influenza is an example of multilateralism at its best. It has demonstrated what is possible when the international community makes a strong commitment to fighting a specific human security challenge. By placing vulnerable communities and countries at the centre of the planning process, policymakers and development practitioners are better able to understand the specific gaps and vulnerabilities in a given situation and, as a result, can more appropriately target their responses to where it matters the most.

44. Past efforts have also demonstrated that success depends on implementing comprehensive protection and empowerment strategies. Protection measures aim at preventing, monitoring and anticipating health-related threats. They entail developing early warning and response mechanisms as well as strengthening preparedness to identify, validate and control health-related challenges. Meanwhile, empowerment measures rely on improving health-care systems, educating and mobilizing the public, and developing local-level health insurance schemes. Together such a comprehensive framework improves preparedness for current and emerging health-related challenges as well as progress in the provision of affordable, functioning and accessible health care, both of which are instrumental to long-term prosperity and development.

D. Climate change and the increase in the frequency and intensity of climate-related hazard events

1. The multidimensional impact

45. Climate change and its interactions with other insecurities is one of the most pressing issues of our time. Among its many consequences are an increase in the frequency, variability and intensity of events such as floods, storms, desertification and droughts. Climate change also exacerbates poverty. Climatic fluctuations, environmental degradation and extreme weather patterns disrupt harvests, deplete fisheries, erode livelihoods and increase the spread of infectious diseases. Vulnerable groups are particularly at risk, not only from the immediate impacts of climate-related disasters but also from knock-on risk factors such as displacement and migration.

46. As I outlined in my report on climate change and its possible security implications (A/64/350), climate change can also be a "threat multiplier" where the loss of land, coupled with persistent poverty, displacement and other insecurities, may trigger competition over increasingly scarce natural resources that can intensify into societal tensions. With majority of climate-related deaths and economic losses occurring in poor regions, climate change puts an enormous stress on the social and economic systems of poor countries.

2. Current responses

47. To date, Governments and their international partners have reached a common understanding on the need to place climate change in the broader context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. In particular, there is broad consensus on the importance of mainstreaming disaster reduction and risk management into national development plans, promoting community-based adaptation and mitigation plans, and accelerating the transfer and deployment of information, knowledge and technologies, especially to those countries most vulnerable to climate change.

48. Meanwhile, where climate change threatens to exacerbate socio-economic conditions, a better understanding of the interlinkages between climate change and other dimensions of human security is needed. Such an understanding can help assess the causes and identify the actions needed to manage the combined risks of climate-related insecurities. In these fragile spots, special attention from the international community is required to assist countries in reducing the social stresses that emerge when State institutions are overstretched and the delivery of basic services is inadequate.

E. Prevention of violent conflicts, peacekeeping and peacebuilding

1. The multidimensional impact

49. Contemporary conflicts overwhelmingly impact civilian populations. In the aftermath of conflicts, peace is often very fragile and the needs of people are far greater than the capacities available. As a result, post-conflict situations are fluid and create new uncertainties that together can weaken the ability of the affected population to establish the necessary conditions for recovery.

50. Despite these daunting challenges, post-conflict situations provide significant opportunities to address the root causes of conflicts, heal fragmentations, diminish inequalities and strengthen State-society relations. In this critical and fragile period, people's rights to political, economic, social and cultural freedoms must be protected to help Governments recover from the aftermaths of conflicts.

2. Current responses

51. In recent years, responses to conflict prevention have increasingly focused on tackling the root causes of conflicts. This awareness has resulted in the integration of conflict prevention strategies into national development and poverty reduction plans. The international community has also learned that protection and empowerment measures are not only strategies to be adopted during and after conflicts but are also important conflict prevention mechanisms. As a result, protection efforts have targeted the most vulnerable groups, including women, children and the displaced, and have placed increasing emphasis on supporting the capacities of national authorities to, *inter alia*, provide public safety, deliver essential basic services and strengthen the rule of law. Since conflicts erode trust among communities, protection strategies are most effective when they are complemented with empowerment measures that promote partnerships with local and national stakeholders. Local partners can play a significant role in reinforcing national ownership in the country's future, nurturing reconciliation and coexistence and restoring trust in the institutions that return stability to post-conflict situations.

52. Conflict prevention also requires integrated and multisectoral strategies that cover all aspects of recovery. Such an integrated approach advances targeted responses that capitalize on the expertise and the potential complementarities between political, military, humanitarian and developmental actors, thus avoiding duplication across sectors and strengthening the prospect for recovery in post-conflict settings. At the United Nations, a key mechanism to ensure the coherence of all activities of the Organization in post-conflict situations has been the Peacebuilding Commission. Through its unique membership and working modalities, the Commission has promoted peacebuilding activities in Burundi, the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone. It is my hope that as the Commission approaches its five-year review later in 2010, the principles and goals of human security will be further reflected in its activities.

VI. Initiatives to promote human security

53. The human security concept not only highlights the institutional gaps that may hinder our common objectives to address current and emerging threats but it also reminds us of the added value of a people-centred approach that instils a sense of ownership and duty by all involved, including Governments, private citizens, regional organizations and the international community. The following are examples of recent efforts to advance human security at national and regional levels as well as within the United Nations system.

A. National initiatives

54. Over the past two decades, Governments have made significant efforts to place human security in their national and foreign policies. In addition to efforts made by members of the Friends of Human Security and the Human Security Network, concerns for human security are also of interest to countries like Mongolia, Ecuador and Thailand.

55. In 2000, human security became a priority area for the Government of Mongolia, which is currently implementing an initiative under its Good Governance for Human Security programme. Moreover, as the host of the Fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies in 2003, Mongolia reinforced its commitment to incorporating the fundamental principles of human security into its domestic policies and ratified the Ulaanbaatar Declaration on Democracy, Good Governance and Civil Society.

56. In 2008, Ecuador adopted human security in its constitution, paving the way for a more people-centred response to some of the country's most urgent and critical threats. Focusing on the link between peace and development, the Government of Ecuador aims to build sustainable peace on the basis of development, social justice, equality and dignity.

57. Another contributor to the growing movement to promote human security is the Government of Thailand. Thailand is the first country to establish a ministry dedicated to human security. Among its many activities, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security works to advance "freedom from want" and "freedom to live in dignity" from a people-centred perspective, actively utilizing and promoting strengthened multisectoral collaboration among national organizations dedicated to the promotion of human security.

B. Regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations

58. Regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations play an important role in identifying common insecurities, mobilizing support and advancing collective action. With knowledge of the political nuances and cultural sensitivities of their regions, these organizations are crucial partners in guaranteeing human security.

59. In Africa, the importance of human security and the interlinkages between peace, security and development are reflected in the work of the African Union and have been included in decisions such as its Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact, the African Union Constitution Act and the Statement of Commitment to Peace and Security in Africa. At the subregional level, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has employed the principles of human security in its efforts to maintain and advance peace and security. To that end, in 2008, ECOWAS adopted its Conflict Prevention Framework, with the objective of strengthening the human security architecture in the subregion and ensuring timely and targeted multi-actor and multidimensional responses to combat threats to human security.

60. In 1997, in response to the Asian financial crisis, the members of ASEAN issued a joint statement, ASEAN Vision 2020, which envisaged a region where respect for human dignity and equitable access to opportunities allow for

comprehensive human development. Since that time, human security has gained additional ground among ASEAN member States, as was reflected in the 2009 joint declaration of ASEAN Defence Ministers, which highlighted the importance of non-traditional threats to security and the role of ASEAN in advancing integrated responses to such challenges. Similarly, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC) has also recognized the importance of human security to sustainable growth and prosperity. As a result, since the eleventh APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Bangkok in 2003, leaders have asserted the need to enhance human security by acknowledging that vulnerability to natural disasters, international terrorism, pandemics and cross-border drug trade impose high economic costs that threaten human security in the subregion.

61. Also noteworthy is the Declaration on Security in the Americas, adopted in October 2003 by OAS. The Declaration acknowledges that the conditions for human security are dependent upon respect for people's dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

C. United Nations system: initiatives at the policy level

62. In addition to contributions by Member States, the work of the Commission on Human Security has been critical in advancing the human security concept within the United Nations system. Established in order to advance the twin goals of "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear" agreed to at the 2000 Millennium Summit, the Commission embarked on a programme of global outreach and engaged in wide-ranging consultations with Governments, regional and international organizations and civil society. The Commission's final report, *Human Security Now*, published in 2003, has been instrumental in enhancing the application of the human security concept in the United Nations, most notably, in the work of the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security. In 2004, the Trust Fund revised its funding guidelines according to the findings contained in the Commission's report, and, the projects it funds today, under the guidance of the Advisory Board on Human Security, reflect the Commission's innovative recommendations.

63. The Human Development Report Office at UNDP has also played an important role in improving the understanding of the human security concept. Since the issuance of the *Human Development Report 1994* on human security, some 20 national human development reports have been produced on this subject. These reports have demonstrated how the human security concept can be contextualized and used to promote responses that better address the specific insecurities facing each country. For example, the 2003 national report of Latvia focuses on the multiplicity of insecurities experienced by the Latvian people during a period of social, economic and political transition and offers policy suggestions to enhance their resilience and capacities. Similarly, the 2004 national report of Afghanistan provides a comprehensive analysis of the multidimensional causes of the insecurities faced by the people of Afghanistan and outlines specific policy recommendations needed for the rebuilding of the country.

64. UNESCO has also convened a series of conferences entitled, "Promoting human security: ethical, normative and educational frameworks" at the regional and subregional levels. These conferences and the accompanying publications have highlighted the region-specific and yet the universal nature of human security. The

outcome of the regional consultations is summarized in a final publication issued in 2008, entitled, *Human Security: Approaches and Challenges*.

D. Field-based projects funded by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security

65. Over the past 10 years, the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security has played a critical role in channelling financial resources to field-based projects on the application of the human security concept in the United Nations system. As at December 2009, the Trust Fund had allocated approximately \$323 million to 187 projects in over 60 countries. These projects address multisectoral issues and give priority to regions where insecurities are most critical and pervasive. Since 1999, projects in Africa have received the highest percentage of funding, at 32.3 per cent, with Eastern Europe and Central Asia receiving 29 per cent, Asia and the Pacific 23.3 per cent, Latin America and the Caribbean 7.7 per cent, the Middle East and Arab States 2.9 per cent, and global projects receiving 4.8 per cent. The following are some examples of the projects supported by the Trust Fund.

66. In the Ituri region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Trust Fund is supporting a project that combines the efforts of UNDP, FAO, UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), UNEFA and WHO, along with local, national and international non-governmental organizations, as well as the provincial government. Placing communities at the centre of post-conflict recovery, the project addresses the full range of insecurities faced by people of the district. In particular, the project aims to strengthen public safety; improve health and education; support economic recovery and promote a culture of peaceful coexistence between diverse groups. The combined impact of these efforts provides significant opportunities to decrease inequalities, strengthen social networks and improve State-society relations, all of which are required to produce the peace dividend needed to bolster confidence in consolidating peace and transitioning to sustainable development.

67. For generations, poppy production has been the main source of income for large segments of inhabitants in the highlands of Shan State in Myanmar. While recent efforts on opium eradication have produced considerable progress, however, in the absence of alternative income opportunities for former poppy farmers, incomes have declined in the affected communities. This has triggered concerns over the possible resumption of tensions between competing ethnic groups in the area. With funding from the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, several United Nations organizations (WFP, FAO, UNODC and UNEFA), in partnership with local and international non-governmental organizations, are working together to enhance the requisite health, education, nutrition, infrastructure and capacity-building needs of former poppy farmers and poor vulnerable families in the region. By improving livelihoods and strengthening food security, the project provides tangible alternatives to communities facing difficulties in freeing themselves from their dependency on poppy production and enhances the conditions for the eradication of poppy production in Myanmar.

68. The areas of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine that were affected by the Chernobyl nuclear accident, in addition to those around the former nuclear test site of Semipalatinsk in Kazakhstan, are facing challenges related to fears of

radiation; lack of income opportunities and social services. Multi-agency projects supported by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security respond to the most important human security needs of the affected populations. The Semipalatinsk project, for example, focuses on improving living standards through income generation, access to microcredit, and community empowerment. In addition, the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network works to help the region by providing up-to-date and scientifically accurate information on how to live safely in areas affected by the accident. By using the multisectoral and people-centred focus of the human security concept, the projects succeed in bringing additional partners, promoting self-reliance and offering sustainable opportunities for dignified livelihoods.

VII. Conclusion: the core elements and added value of human security

69. In today's increasingly interlinked world, where threats can potentially spread rapidly within and across countries, human security is a practical approach to the growing interdependence of vulnerabilities facing peoples and communities. As a result, the application of human security calls for people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and preventive responses. Such an approach helps focus attention on current and emerging threats; identifies the root causes behind these threats; and supports early warning systems that help mitigate the impact of such threats. Furthermore, such an approach promotes multi-stakeholder responses that enable the protection and empowerment of people and communities. Together these aim to advance freedom from fear, freedom from want and freedom to live in dignity for all.

VIII. Recommendations

70. The broad understanding of human security, as contained in paragraph 143 of the World Summit Outcome and further defined in the present report, is at the centre of the work of the United Nations. With a mandate to address security, development and human rights, the United Nations system is instrumental in addressing human security issues. The application of the human security concept does not bring additional layers to the work of the United Nations, but rather complements and focuses the activities of the Organization in these areas.

71. At the Secretariat, the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security has played an important role in addressing human security challenges. In addition to the valuable support provided by the Governments of Greece, Japan, Slovenia and Thailand, I strongly urge other Member States to contribute to the valuable work of the Trust Fund.

72. The General Assembly is therefore requested:

(a) To consider the present report;

(b) To take into account the added value of the human security concept as outlined herein and to discuss how best to mainstream human security in United Nations activities;

(c) To encourage Member States to give financial support to the valuable work of the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security;

(d) To request a periodic report on progress in mainstreaming human security in United Nations activities, to be submitted by the Secretary-General every two years.
